



# STATISTICS

## Quarterly private health insurance statistics

December 2023 (released 28 February 2024)

## **Disclaimer and Copyright**

While APRA endeavours to ensure the quality of this publication, it does not accept any responsibility for the accuracy, completeness or currency of the material included in this publication and will not be liable for any loss or damage arising out of any use of, or reliance on, this publication.

**© Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA)**

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia Licence (CCBY 3.0). This licence allows you to copy, distribute and adapt this work, provided you attribute the work and do not suggest that APRA endorses you or your work. To view a full copy of the terms of this licence, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/>

## Contents

Snapshot of the industry.....	2
Membership and coverage.....	3
Benefits paid.....	5
Service utilisation.....	8
Out-of-pocket payments.....	9
Notes on statistics.....	10
Related publications.....	11

### **Forthcoming issues**

This publication will be released according to the timetable published on the APRA website.

### **Revisions**

This publication will include revisions to previously published statistics if better source data becomes available or if compilation errors are uncovered.

APRA regularly analyses past revisions to identify potential improvements to the source data and statistical compilation techniques, in order to minimise the frequency and scale of any future revisions.

### **Rounding**

Details on tables may not add up to totals due to rounding of figures.

### **Enquiries**

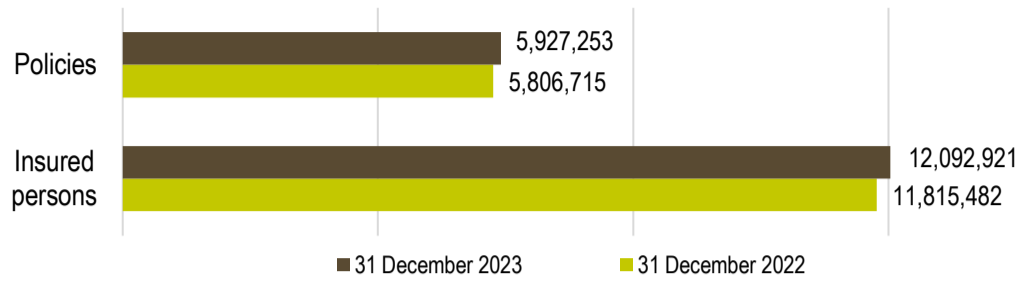
For more information about the statistics in this publication:

[DataAnalytics@apra.gov.au](mailto:DataAnalytics@apra.gov.au)

Manager, External Data and Reporting  
Australian Prudential Regulation Authority  
GPO Box 9836  
Sydney NSW 2001

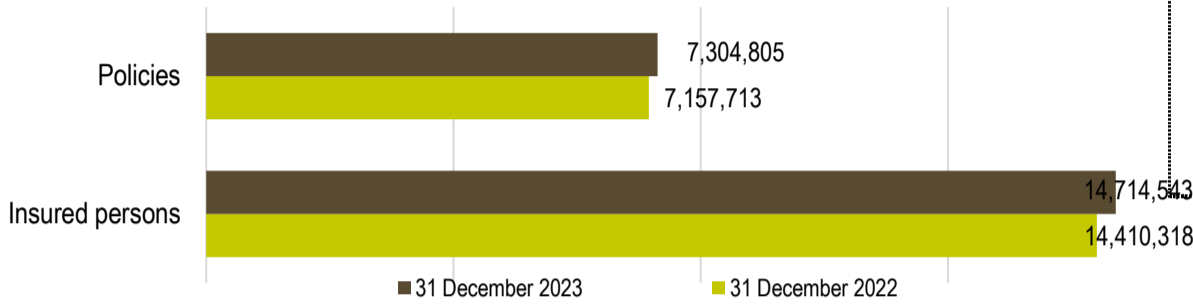
# Key metrics

## Hospital treatment membership



**44.9%** of population at 31 December 2023  
 ↓ **-0.1%** percentage points from 30 Sep 2023  
 ↑ **54,908** insured persons over the quarter

## General treatment membership



**54.6%** of population at 31 December 2023  
 ↓ **-0.1%** percentage points from 30 Sep 2023  
 ↑ **53,078** insured persons over the quarter

### Hospital treatment episodes

Period	Value
12 months to 31 December 2023	4,908,676
12 months to 31 December 2022	4,494,776

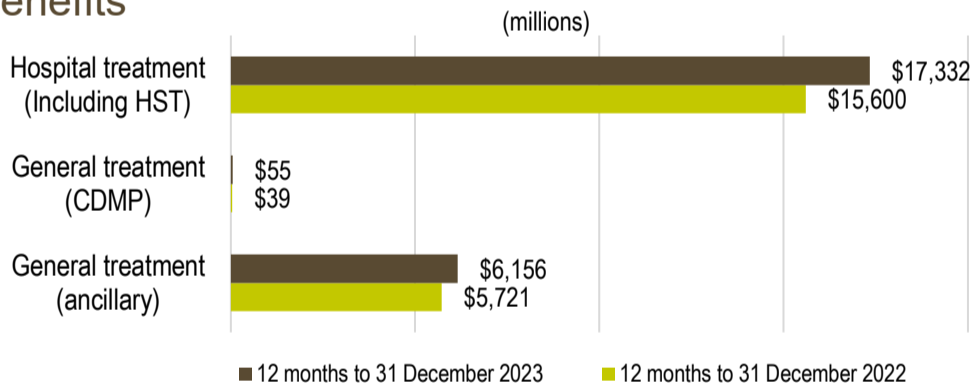
↑ **9.2%** over the 12 months to December 2023  
 ↑ **0.5%** compared to the September 2023 quarter

### General treatment services (ancillary)

Period	Value
12 months to 31 December 2023	102,384,072
12 months to 31 December 2022	96,255,960

↑ **6.4%** over the 12 months to December 2023  
 ↑ **5.4%** compared to the September 2023 quarter

## Benefits



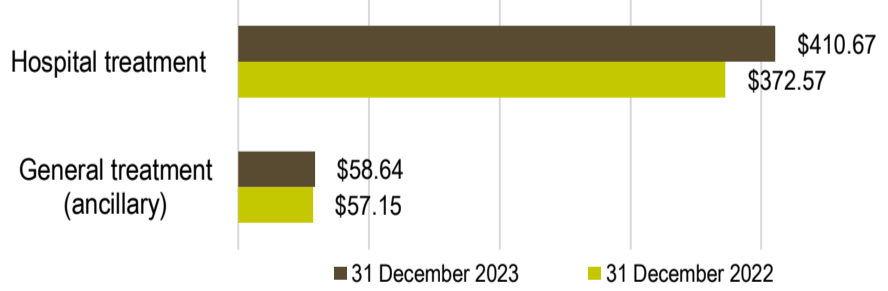
↑ **11.1%** over the 12 months to December 2023  
 ↑ **5.0%** compared to the December 2022 quarter

↑ **7.6%** over the 12 months to December 2023  
 ↑ **4.6%** compared to the December 2022 quarter

↑ **10.2%** over the 12 months to December 2023

↑ **2.6%** over the 12 months to December 2023

## Out-of-pocket per episode/service

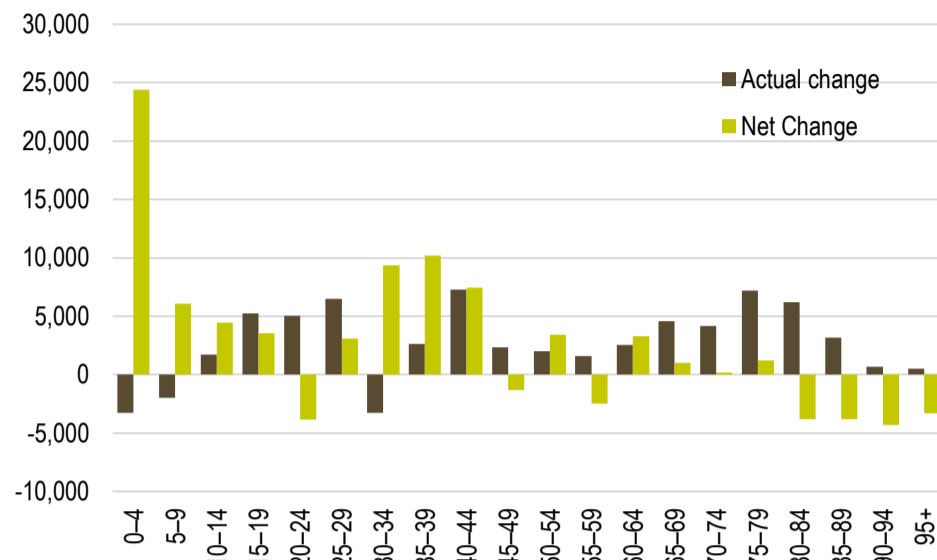


## Hospital Treatment

At 31 December 2023, 12,092,921 people, or 44.9% of the population, were covered by hospital treatment cover. There was a slight increase compared to September 2023. There was an increase in coverage of 54,908 insured people in the December 2023 quarter compared to September 2023. Family policies increased by 7,077 and single policies by 12,277 during the quarter.

The largest increase in coverage during the quarter was 7,298 for people aged between 40 and 44. The largest net increase (taking into account movement between age groups) was for the 0-4 with an increase of 24,407 people.

Net quarterly change in insured persons

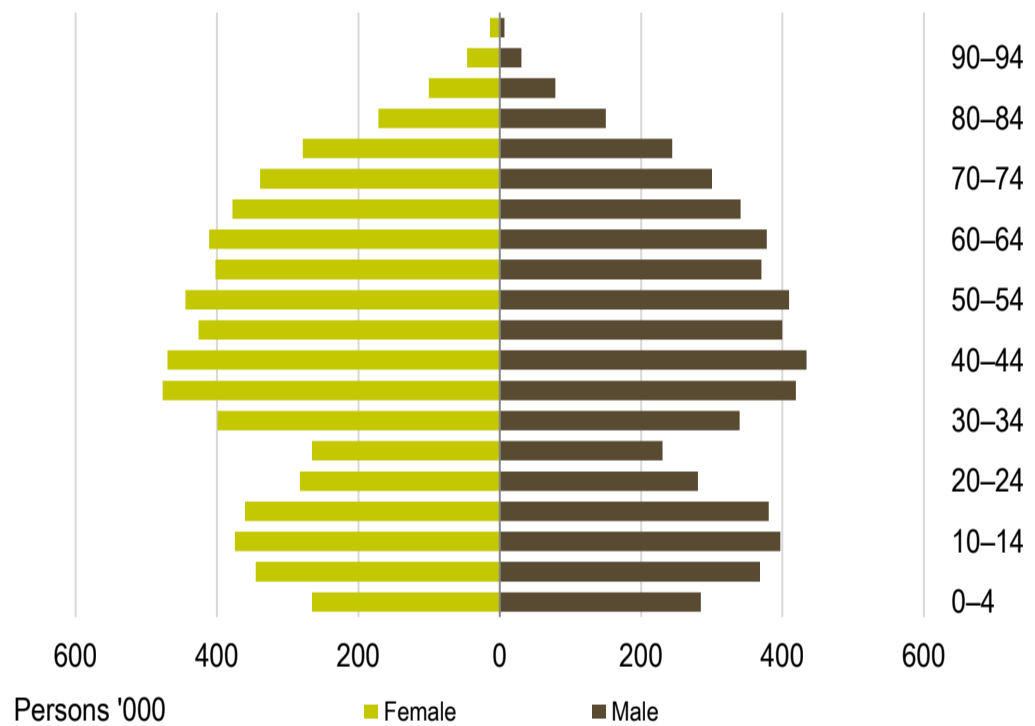


## Lifetime health cover

The majority of adults with hospital cover (88.5%) have a certified age of entry of 30, with no penalty loading.

At the end of the 31 December 2023 quarter, there were 1,002,666 people with a certified age of entry of more than 30 and subject to a Lifetime Health Cover loading; a net increase in people paying a penalty over the preceding 12 months of 62,320. There was a net increase in people with a certified age of entry of 30 (with no penalty) over the year of 106,289. Over the year, 121,255 people had their loading removed after paying a loading for ten years.

Number of persons insured by age



Hospital treatment tables						
State/Territory	Insured persons (%)	Non insured persons (%)	Male	Female	Single policies (%)	Family policies (%)
Aust.	44.9%	55.1%	5,838,848	6,254,073	48.7%	51.3%
NSW	46.4%	53.6%	1,892,872	2,018,239	48.5%	51.5%
VIC	42.1%	57.9%	1,398,113	1,510,911	50.8%	49.2%
QLD	41.0%	59.0%	1,087,454	1,176,127	47.1%	52.9%
SA	44.6%	55.4%	398,051	435,314	49.3%	50.7%
WA	54.2%	45.8%	778,634	803,845	47.1%	52.9%
TAS	41.7%	58.3%	113,114	126,173	49.8%	50.2%
ACT	53.6%	46.4%	121,275	131,977	49.3%	50.7%
NT	39.8%	60.2%	49,335	51,487	49.0%	51.0%

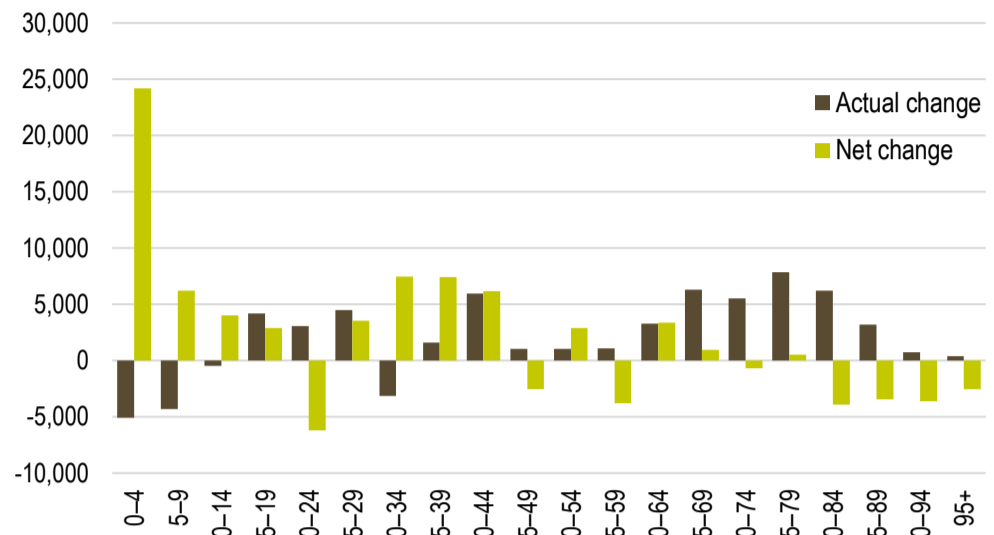
## General Treatment

At 31 December 2023, 14,724,543 people or 54.6% of the population had some form of general treatment cover. There was an increase of 53,078 people when compared to the September quarter. There was an increase of General Treatment policies of 25,870 for December 2023 which was mainly driven by Single Policies which increased by 13,982. For the 12 months to 31 December 2023, the number of insured persons with general treatment cover has increased by 304,225.

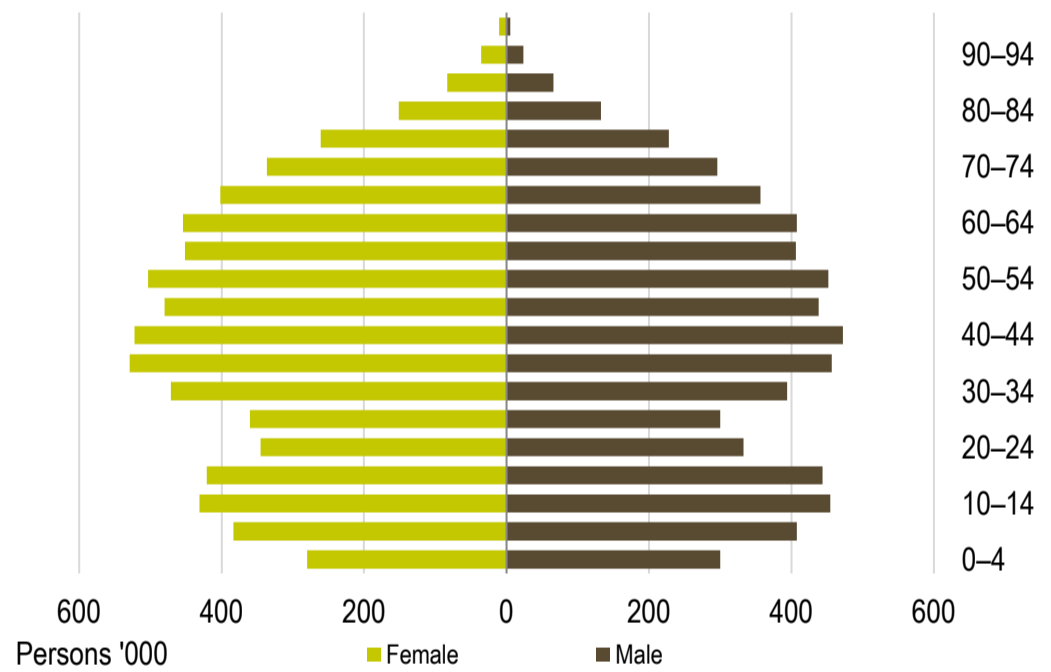
The general treatment (ancillary) by age charts and data in this report show data for those people that have general treatment policies covering ancillary services, regardless of other treatment included in the product. This excludes those general treatment policies that do not cover ancillary treatment.

There was an increase of 42,896 people with general treatment (ancillary) coverage in the December 2023 quarter. The largest net increase in coverage, after accounting for movements across age groups, was 24,168 for people in the 0 to 4 age group.

Net quarterly change in insured persons (ancillary)



Number of persons insured by age (ancillary)



General treatment tables (ancillary)

State/Territory	Insured persons (%)	Not insured persons (%)	Male	Female	Single policies (%)	Family policies (%)
Aust.	54.6%	45.4%	6,373,002	6,912,595	50.2%	49.8%
NSW	57.1%	42.9%	2,105,192	2,258,962	49.5%	50.5%
VIC	49.8%	50.2%	1,399,435	1,526,591	52.1%	47.9%
QLD	48.0%	52.0%	1,146,816	1,267,756	49.2%	50.8%
SA	59.2%	40.8%	487,159	539,432	50.8%	49.2%
WA	68.4%	31.6%	932,342	985,208	49.5%	50.5%
TAS	49.6%	50.4%	121,800	138,233	51.7%	48.3%
ACT	65.6%	34.4%	129,281	142,139	50.4%	49.6%
NT	44.7%	55.3%	50,977	54,274	50.5%	49.5%

# Benefits Paid

## Hospital treatment

### Benefits per episode/service

	December 2023	Change from September 2023
Hospital Treatment		
Acute	\$2,551	0.1%
Medical	\$66	1.6%
Prostheses	\$652	0.1%
Cardiac	\$3,254	-0.8%
Hip	\$1,616	0.3%
Knee	\$1,666	0.0%
Total benefits and growth rate		
Hospital	\$4,471,056,294	0.8%
General	\$1,609,211,849	8.4%

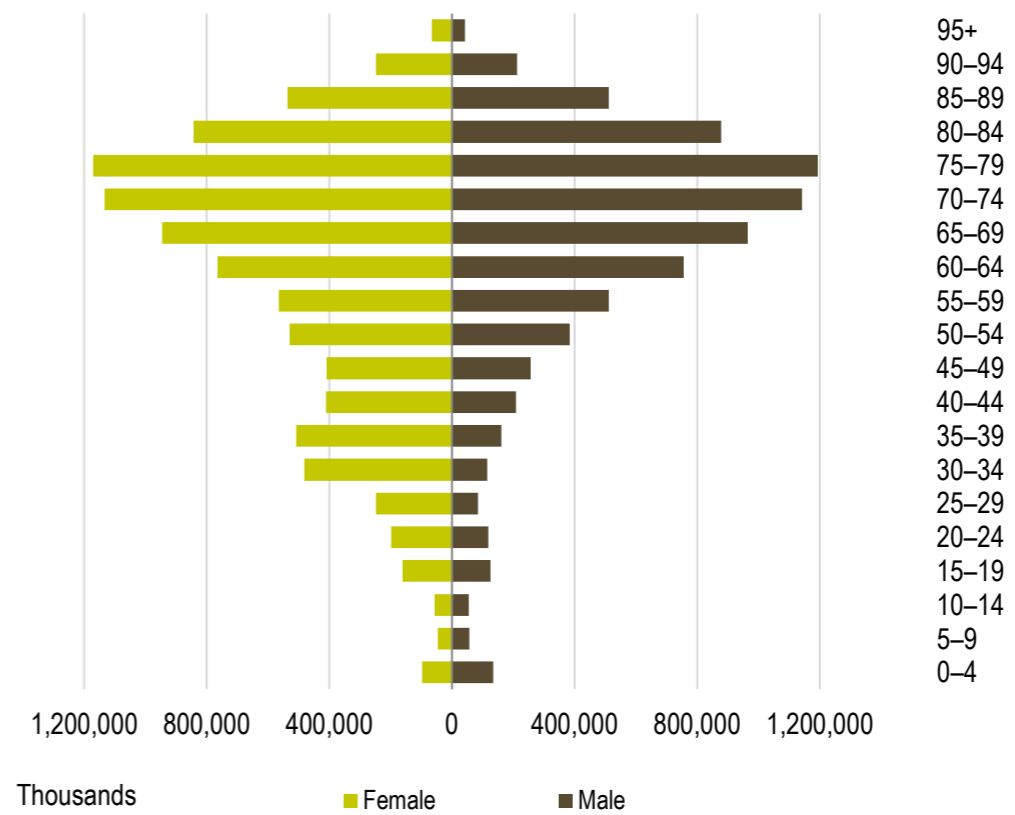
During the December 2023 quarter, insurers paid \$4,471 million in hospital treatment benefits, which was 0.75% higher compared to the September 2023 quarter. Hospital treatment benefits were comprised of:

- ◇ \$3,197 million for hospital services such as accommodation and nursing
- ◇ \$667 million for medical services
- ◇ \$607 million for prostheses items.

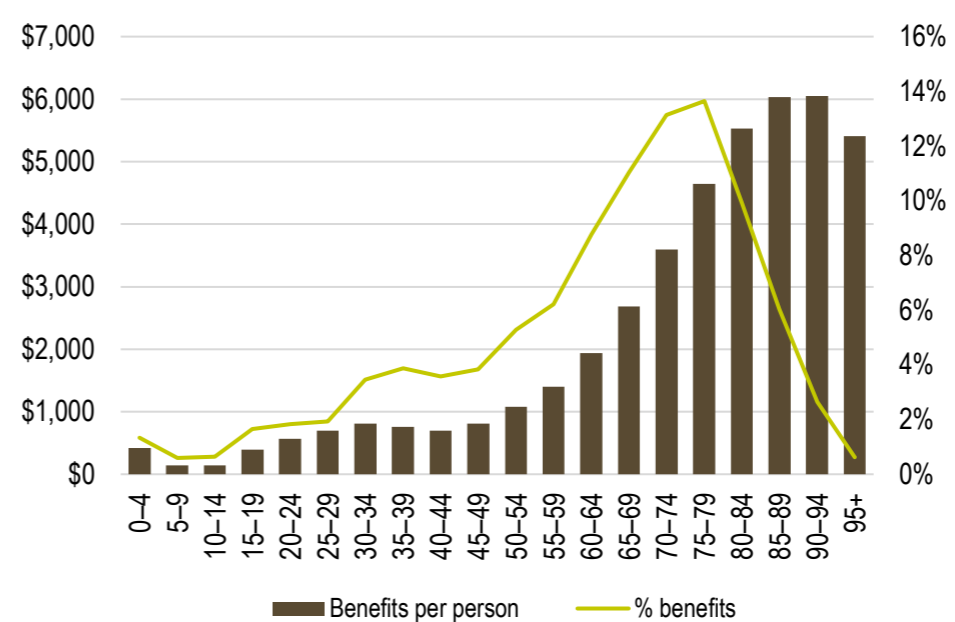
The age group for which most hospital benefits are paid is between 75 and 79 (top chart). Total benefits by age group is affected by the average benefits paid per person (displayed in the second chart) and the number of people in each age group.

Average hospital benefits per person increased from \$1,320.28 for the year ending December 2022 to \$1,433.23 for the year ending December 2023. The largest amount of benefits per person was spent on hospital accommodation and medical, followed by medical services and then prostheses benefits.

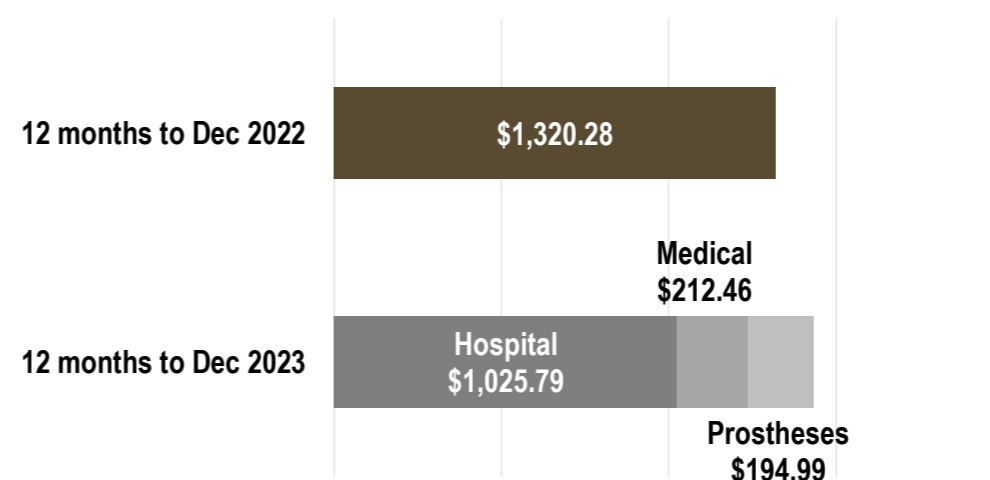
Hospital treatment benefits paid by age 12 months to 31 December 2023



Hospital treatment benefits per person covered and percentage of benefits paid by age cohort



Hospital treatment benefits per person



**General treatment**

**Benefits per service**

	December 2023	Change from September 2023
Dental	\$66	1.5%
Chiropractic	\$33	-1.9%
Physiotherapy	\$39	-0.4%
Optical	\$81	-0.1%

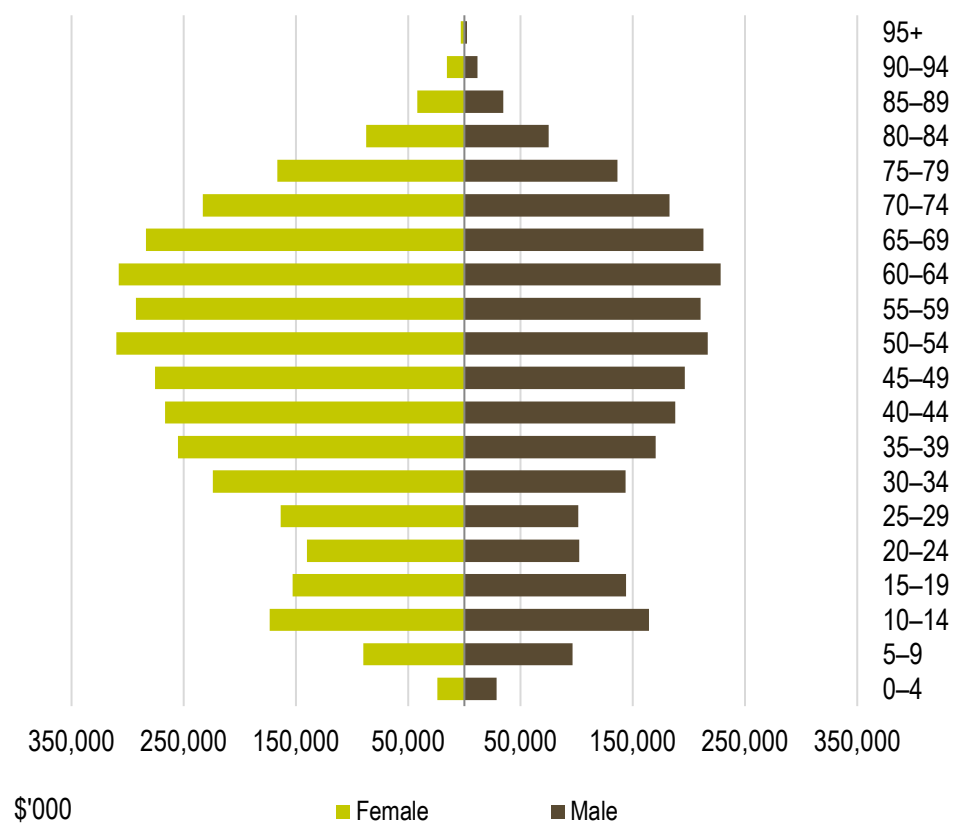
During the December 2023 quarter, insurers paid \$1,595.8 million in general treatment (ancillary) benefits. This was an increase of 8.6% compared to the September 2023 quarter. Ancillary benefits for the December 2023 quarter included the major categories of:

- ◇ Dental \$860.9 million
- ◇ Optical \$305.7 million
- ◇ Physiotherapy \$105.6 million
- ◇ Chiropractic \$67.8 million.

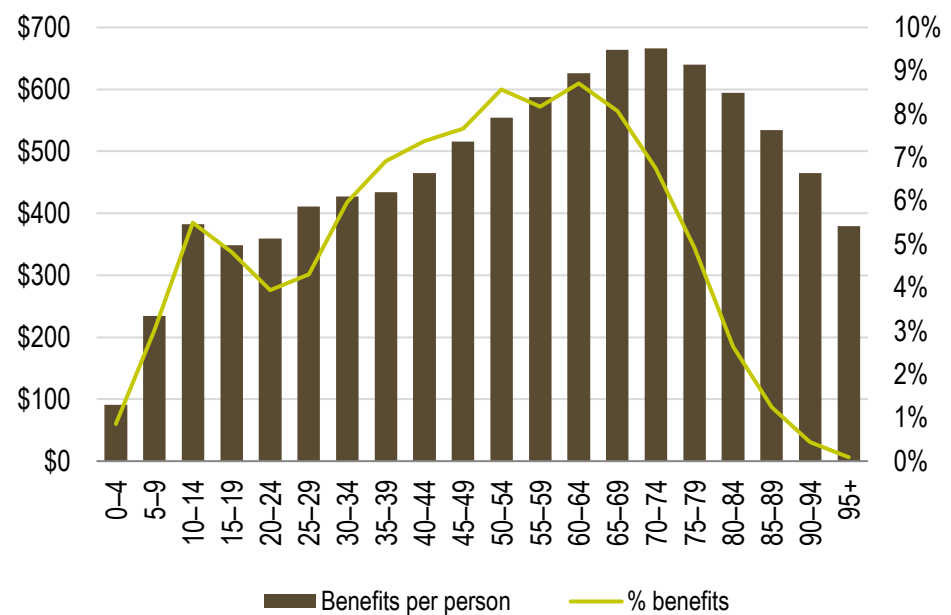
There is a marked difference between the distribution of benefits over age groups between hospital benefits and ancillary benefits. The major difference is the higher claiming rate in older age groups for hospital benefits while benefits per person for ancillary benefits are more evenly spread over the age groups.

General treatment (ancillary) benefits per person during the year to December 2022 were \$439.10 increasing to \$463.35 for the year to December 2023. The largest component of ancillary benefits is dental, for which \$253.07 was paid per insured.

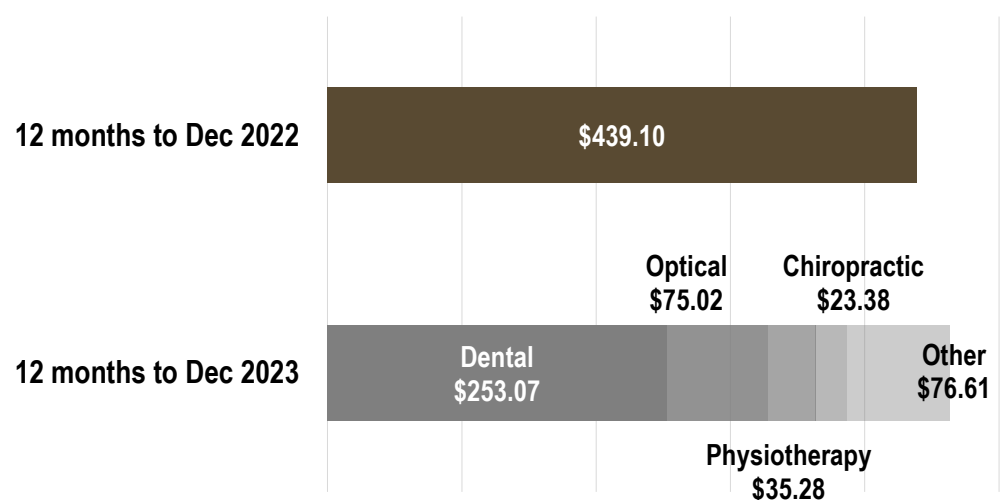
**General treatment benefits paid by age 12 months to 31 December 2023 (ancillary)**



**General treatment benefits per person covered and percentage of benefits paid by age cohort (ancillary)**



**General treatment benefits per person (ancillary)**





## Medical benefits

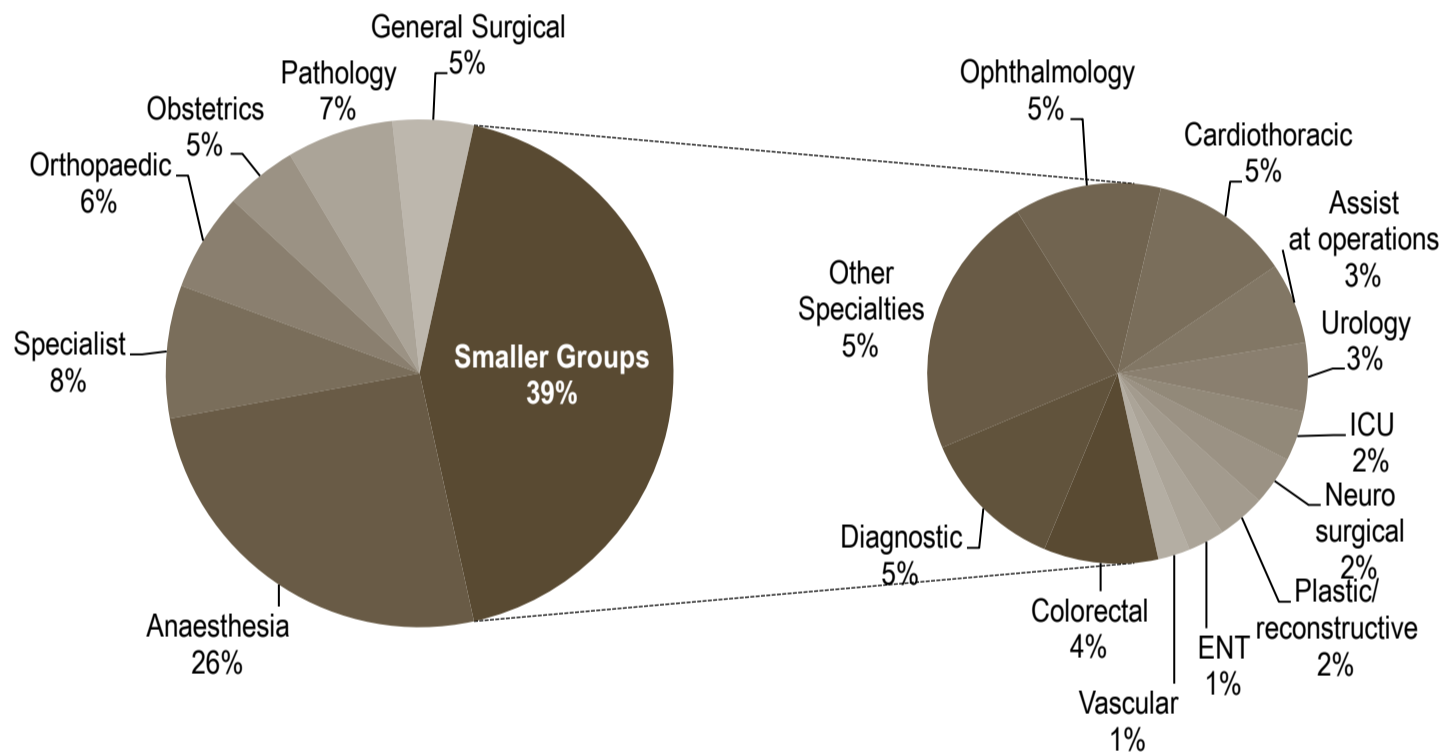
Total benefits for medical services decreased 0.3% during the December quarter 2023.

The change in medical benefits paid per service was calculated over a range of medical services and does not mean medical services overall decreased or increased in cost. The average benefits paid reflects the type of medical services utilised during the quarter as well as the volume of services. The medical service for which the greatest amount of benefits was paid was anaesthetics, comprising 25.6% of all medical benefits and totalling \$170.76 million.

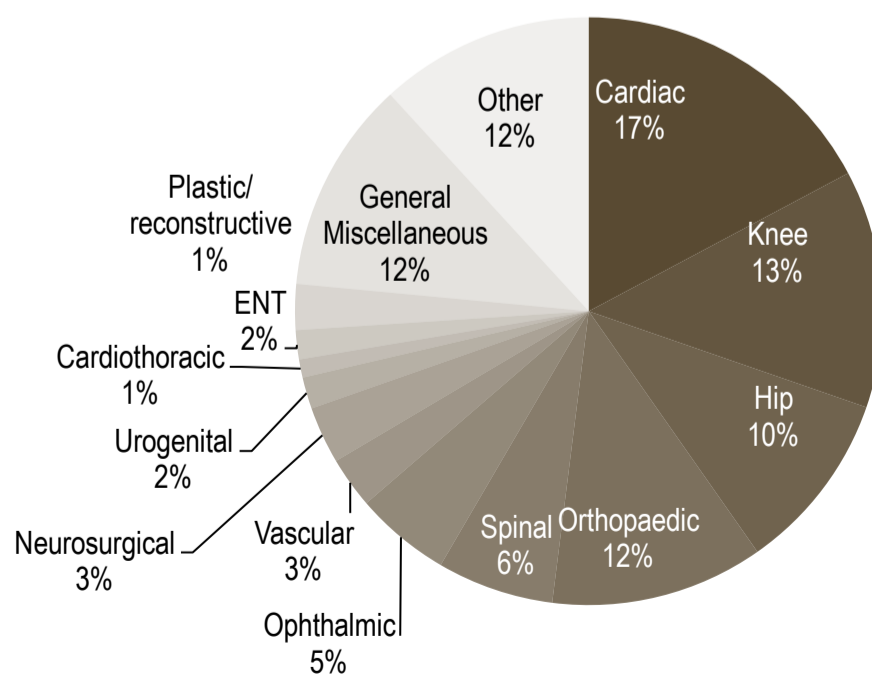
## Prostheses benefits

Total benefits paid for prostheses increased by 2.6% in December 2023 compared to September 2023. Similar to medical services, the change in benefits paid for prostheses was calculated over a range of prosthetics (see chart) and does not mean prostheses overall changed in cost. The change in benefits paid may reflect a change in the type of prosthetics utilised, or a change in the overall utilisation of prosthetics. The prosthetic group for which the greatest amount of benefits were paid was cardiac, comprising 17.2% of all prosthetic benefits and totalling \$104.50 million.

Medical benefits by Speciality group



Benefits paid for prostheses



# Service utilisation

## Episodes/Services by type

	December 2023	Change from September 2023
Hospital Episodes	1,252,769	0.5%
Hospital Days	3,127,046	-0.7%
Medical Services	10,167,867	-1.9%
Prostheses Items	930,954	2.4%
Specialist Orthopaedic	174,208	0.0%
Ophthalmic	112,495	3.7%
Spinal	57,259	0.7%
General Treatment	26,161,322	5.4%
Dental	13,055,835	3.8%
Chiropractic	2,062,993	-9.5%
Physiotherapy	2,679,505	-9.3%
Optical	3,791,039	48.4%

Hospital utilisation is distributed over four categories of hospital—public, private, day only facilities and hospital-substitute. During the December 2023 quarter, hospital episodes were distributed as follows:

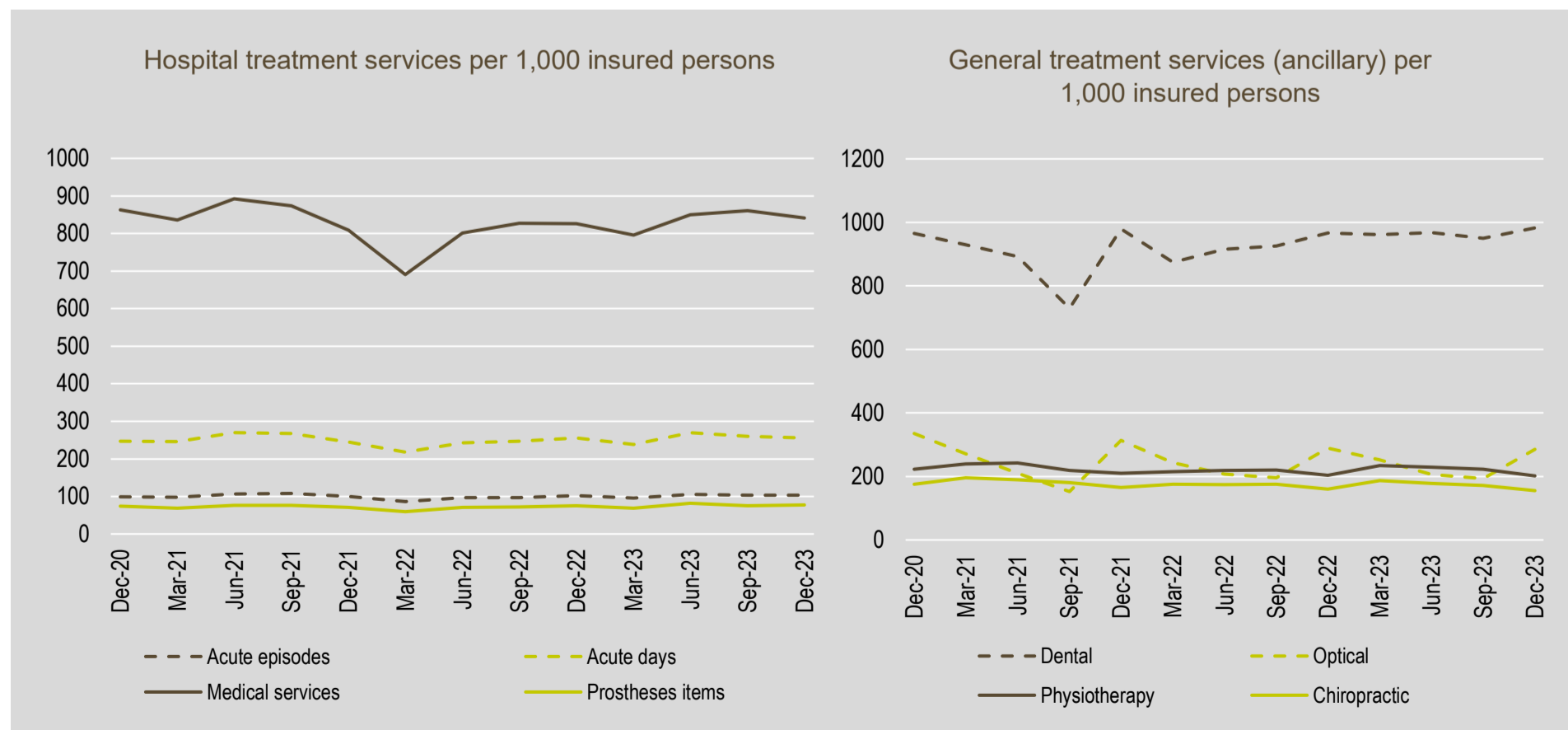
- ◇ public hospitals 179,960 episodes
- ◇ private hospitals 833,296 episodes
- ◇ day hospital facilities 174,860 episodes
- ◇ hospital substitute 64,653 episodes.

For the December 2023 quarter, hospital utilisation (measured in episodes) increased by 0.5% which was mainly driven by hospitals-substitute.

During the December 2023 quarter, insurers paid benefits for 3.1 million days in hospital, arising from 1.3 million hospital episodes of care.

	Quarter change	Year change
◇ public hospitals	↓ -0.4%	↑ 9.2%
◇ private hospitals	↓ 0.0%	↑ 9.9%
◇ day hospital facilities	↑ 2.6%	↑ 6.6%
◇ hospital-substitute	↑ 4.7%	↑ 7.8%

Day-only episodes in the four categories of hospital totalled 878,777 with a 0.9% change compared to September 2023.



# Out-of-pocket payments

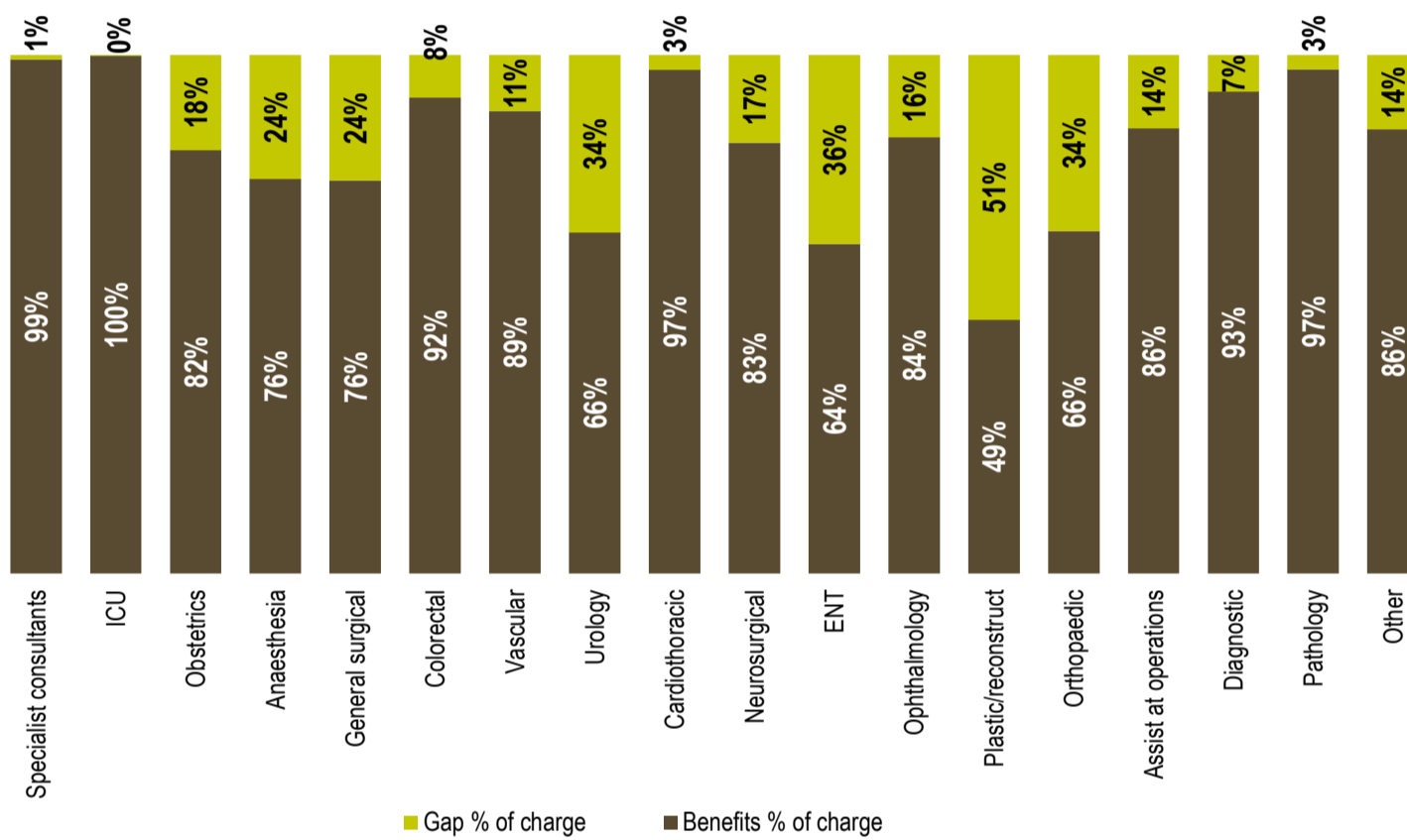
## Average out-of-pocket per episode/service

	December 2023	Change from Sep 23	Change from Dec 22
Hospital treatment	\$410.67	2.6%	10.2%
Hospital-substitute treatment	\$3.15	-12.5%	0.2%
General treatment ancillary	\$58.64	-0.5%	2.6%
Medical gap where gap was paid	\$256.22	6.2%	9.0%

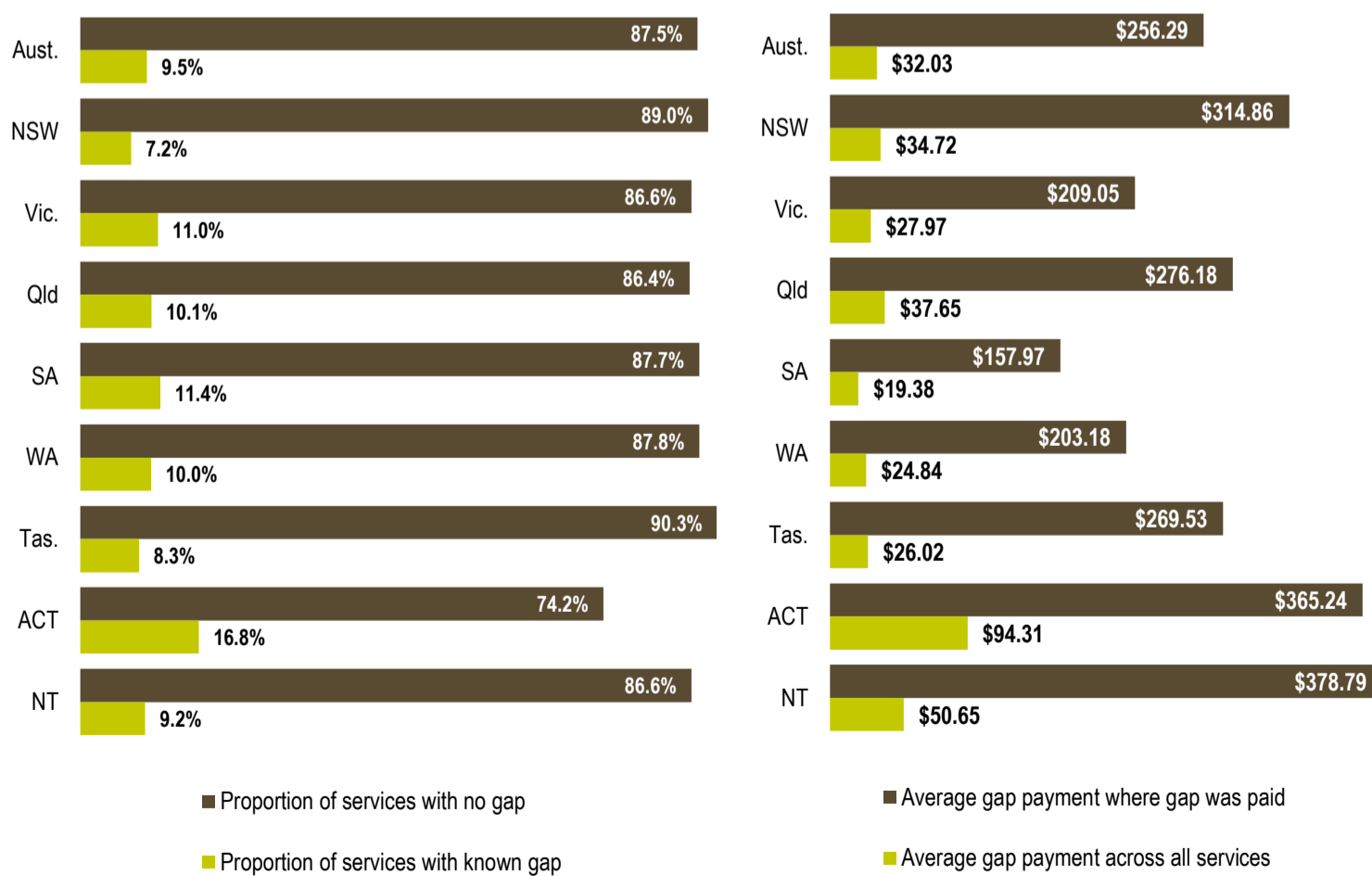
The out-of-pocket payments for hospital episodes increased by 10.2% compared to the same quarter for the previous year. Out-of-pocket payments for medical services were \$256.22 where an out-of-pocket payment was payable. The amount of gap for medical services varies depending on the specialty group. The specialty group with the largest out-of-pocket payment was plastic/reconstructive with an average gap of \$727.39. Gap incurred for the various medical services is displayed in the first chart. Medical gap also varies by state and territory and these differences are shown in the bottom chart.

The average out-of-pocket (gap) payment for a hospital episode was \$410.67 in the December 2023 quarter. This included out-of-pocket payments for medical services, in addition to any excess or co-payment amounts relating to hospital accommodation.

## Medical benefits and out-of-pocket by specialty group



## Proportion of services and average out-of-pocket payments



## Notes on statistics

### Source of data

On 1 July 2015, supervisory responsibilities were transferred from the Private Health Insurance Administration Council (PHIAC) to APRA under the *Private Health Insurance (Prudential Supervision) Act 2015*.

This publication is compiled primarily from regulatory returns submitted to APRA under the *Financial Sector (Collection of Data) Act 2001* by authorised Private Health Insurance companies.

Prior to 1 July 2015, PHIAC collected data from Private Health Insurers.

The population figures used to calculate coverage are derived from:

*Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Demographic Statistics, ABS cat no. 3101.0, ABS, Canberra.*

The June 2019 quarterly release of *Australian Demographic Statistics* contains the most recent estimates of the resident populations (ERP) of Australia and the states and territories based on the results of the 2019 Census of Population and Housing held on 9 August 2016. For more information refer to the publication at the ABS website.

Net change by five year age group is the actual change adjusted for the number of people moving into the cohort and out of the cohort due to ageing. The calculation makes the simplifying assumption that the number of people are evenly distributed over each year within the five year age group.

Lifetime Health Cover is a financial loading (LHC loading) that can be payable in addition to the premium for your private health insurance hospital cover (hospital cover). LHC loadings apply only to hospital cover. The loading is 2% above the base rate for each year over the age of 30 in which the policy holder did not have private health insurance hospital cover. After ten years of paying the loading the loading is removed.

Starting from 1 April 2007, general treatment policies replaced ancillary policies. General treatment policies cover treatment similar to that previously known as ancillary (eg. dental) but can also cover hospital-substitute treatment and Chronic Disease Management Programs.

## Related Publications

### Quarterly publications

A number of related quarterly publications are available from:  
<https://www.apra.gov.au/publications>

These include:

#### [Quarterly Statistics](#)

The Quarterly Statistics are principal release of statistics with summaries for the key financial and membership statistics of the Private Health Insurance industry.

#### [Membership Statistics](#)

A publication which details by State the number of insured persons for hospital treatment and general treatment and the proportion of the population these persons represent. The tables are shown on both a quarterly and an annual basis and include hospital treatment by age cohort.

#### [Medical Gap Information](#)

A publication on in-hospital medical services. The proportion of services for which there was no gap or known gap and the average gap payment are shown for each state.

#### [Private Health Insurance Membership and Benefits \(formerly PHIAC A\)](#)

A publication detailing by State, the membership and benefits paid by private health insurers for the period. These State reports are available both in PDF format and Excel.

#### [Prostheses Report](#)

A report providing data on prosthetic benefits paid by private health insurers by major prosthetic category

#### [Medical Services Report](#)

A report providing data on services, benefits paid and gap payments by MBS Specialty Block Groupings for medical services paid by private health insurers.

#### [Statistical Trends - Quarterly Statistical trends in membership and benefits paid](#)

These are two separate publications detailing trends since September 1997 in the number of insured persons and benefits paid for hospital and general treatment.

### Annual publications

APRA will continue to produce an Annual Report on the Operations of the Private Health Insurance Industry. This report contains an industry overview and tables of statistics by individual fund. Current and historical versions are available at:

<https://www.apra.gov.au/publications/operations-private-health-insurers-annual-report>